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**\*\* CONTINUING DATA \*\*\*\*\***  
 This application is a CON of 09/986,597 11/09/2001 PAT 6,704,154  
 which is a CON of 09/502,056 02/10/2000 PAT 6,335,841 *MF*

**\*\* FOREIGN APPLICATIONS \*\*\*\*\***  
 JAPAN 11-139693 05/20/1999 *MF*

IF REQUIRED, FOREIGN FILING LICENSE GRANTED  
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Foreign Priority claimed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no 35 USC 119 (a-d) conditions met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> Met after Allowance Verified and Acknowledged Examiner's Signature <i>Yoshiju Watanabe</i> Initials <i>YW</i>	STATE OR COUNTRY JAPAN	SHEETS DRAWING 11	TOTAL CLAIMS 15	INDEPENDENT CLAIMS 4
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**TITLE**  
 Decoding apparatus and decoding method

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